

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A computer implemented method:
estimating an expected component surplus by
 identifying a plurality of components required to produce a product;
 defining a vector of connect rates for the components;
 defining an uncancelable level for each of the components, each of the
 uncancelable levels defining a quantity of the each of the components
 below which the quantity of the each of the components cannot be
 liquidated without incurring a charge;
 assuming that a selected one of the components is available at least at an
 uncancelable level of the uncancelable levels corresponding to the selected
 one of the components; and
 computing the expected component surplus for the selected component using a
 mean production for the product, the uncancelable level and the vector of
 connect rates, wherein
 the computing is performed by a computer.
2. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method of claim 1, the
estimating further comprising:
 defining a planned level for the each of the components, each of the planned levels
 defining a quantity at which a corresponding one of the components is expected to
 be available.
3. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method of claim 2, the
estimating further comprising:
 assuming that each of the remaining ones of the components is available at the planned
 level corresponding to the each of the remaining ones of the components, wherein
 the remaining ones of the components are ones of the components other than the
 selected one of the components.

4. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method of claim 3, the estimating further comprising:

using the planned levels in the computing the expected component surplus.

5. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method of claim 4, the estimating further comprising:

estimating the mean production for the product.

6 - 15. (Cancelled)